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For Immediate Release:

TAYLOR TO PERFORM GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY RECITAL

CHARLESTON – It is a fortunate man, indeed, who can take a passion and turn it into a career. Just ask Herman Taylor.

As the 63-year-old professor of music at Eastern Illinois University prepares to celebrate his 50th year as an organist, he continues to speak of his craft with the enthusiasm of a child. His talents, however, reflect those only obtained through decades of practice and dedication.

In celebration of Taylor's half-century of organ music, he plans a Golden Anniversary Organ Recital. The event, set to take place at 3 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 10, in EIU's Dvorak Concert Hall, will feature the works of J. S. Bach, P. D. Q. Bach, Couperin, Franck, Simpson and Vierne. Taylor will be assisted by Alice Jayne Swickard, also on the organ.

Admission is free and open to the public.

Taylor began learning to play the piano at the age of six but, although he enjoyed the piano very much, it was the organ which really caught his interest. "I was always enamored by the sound of the pipe organ," he said.

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As a young teenager, Taylor began taking lessons from the late Walter E. Gossette, organist-choirmaster at St. Mark Methodist Church in Chicago, at \$2 per lesson. "He was a fine player and a fine teacher," Taylor recalled.

Taylor excelled at his studies and by Christmas of 1950 was able to perform George Frederick Handel's "Messiah" before his church's congregation. Only weeks later – at the age of 13 – he was named official organist at the church after his predecessor was drafted into the U.S. Army.

Between his training and experience, Taylor was well-prepared when he entered Roosevelt University's Chicago Musical College in the fall of 1954. After completing his bachelor's of music degree in organ performance, studying with Robert Reuter, he earned both his master's degree and doctorate from the University of Michigan, studying with the renowned pedagogue, Marilyn Mason.

While at Michigan, Taylor served as organist at three churches and accompanied the University Chamber Singers, University Choir, Michigan Glee Club and Ann Arbor Cantata Singers. He also toured with music professors Rosemary Russell, Leslie Gwynn and Willis Patterson.

Through the subsequent years, Taylor has served as organist or organist-director for 11 different religious denominations. He also has performed concerts throughout the United States and Europe. In 1985, during the 300th anniversary of J. S. Bach's birth, he performed his complete organ works in a series of 13 recitals in the U.S. and four in Europe.

Before coming to Eastern, Taylor taught at Prairie View A & M University, Prairie View, Texas; Southern University, Baton Rouge, La.; Dillard University, New Orleans, La.; and the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He arrived at EIU in 1990 as chair of its Department of Music – a position he held for nine years. He remains on the teaching staff, teaching studies in organ as well as other more general courses such as music appreciation and music history.

He also serves as organist at Wesley United Methodist Church in Charleston.